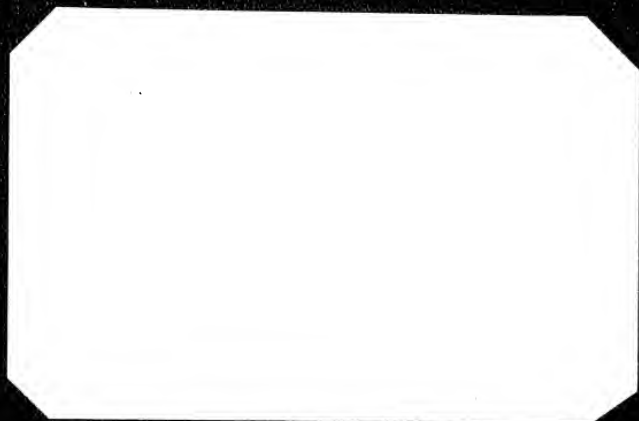


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THE
ROBBERS OF ADULLAM;

OR

A GLANCE AT "ORGANIC SINS."

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT CAMBRIDGEPORT, NOVEMBER 27, 1845.

BY J. C. LOVEJOY,
PASTOR OF THE SECOND EVANG. CONG. CHURCH.

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THE

ROBBERS OF ADULLAM.

S E R M O N .

TEXT—LUKE X. 29. *Who is my neighbor?*

THIS is Thanksgiving day. A day consecrated by the example of our fathers, for rendering praise to Almighty God for the bounties of the year. A day on which they recounted his mercies and rendered thanks for all his manifold blessings. A day for the exercise of a generous hospitality to kindred and friends, and for sending portions to the poor and the needy. The heart of every son of want should be made glad; the widow and the orphan should sing for joy. God has crowned many past years with the abundance of the fruits of the earth and with the wealth of the seas. The rich harvest has waved over extensive fields; fleets of laden vessels have crowded every harbor. The voice of health has been heard in all our habitations; children of the youth, the arrows in the hand of the mighty, crowd the play-ground and throng the school-room.

The cry of war, if it has been heard at all, has been so distant and faint that it has created scarcely any alarm. As for His judgments, we have not known them. O come, then, let us worship ; let us kneel, let us bow down before the Lord our Maker. He is our Shepherd, and we are the sheep of his hand.

In rendering praise to God, it is always appropriate to consider the obligations which his goodness imposes. A careful consideration of our duties, and a faithful discharge of them, is one of the most acceptable offerings we can present.

In answering the question proposed for our consideration this morning, the Savior repeated the parable of the good Samaritan. There are some points in this parable, which will assist us in giving a correct answer to the question, *Who is my neighbor?*

1. They are our neighbors who are suffering bodily distress.

The poor Jew, who had fallen among robbers, was wounded and bruised. Every wound had a voice that cried for help. The poor ye have always with you. They have not ceased out of the land. Poverty in its extremes is a crying want, asking charity from every Christian hand. The appetite for food, *hunger*, has every where an imploring and an importunate look. Ye who sit around groaning tables, daily fed to the full, remember this ; and let the eye that sees you bless you, and the ear that hears the voice of your kind salutation give witness to you. In Great Britain, it is

said, five millions of human beings go hungry to bed every night, to dream only of the full basket and the rich store which they cannot taste. The number is far less in this land, peopled with a fresh and vigorous race. There are some, however, here. They are to be searched out, and in the name of Christ the loaves and fishes which he blesses are to be broken unto them. A long northern winter is just beginning to spread its fleece of snow upon our hills, and its sheets of ice upon the streams and rivers. The fierce blast, that is only music to your ears, as it breaks around the corners of your well ceiled and warmed houses, has another sound to the half-clad, shivering group, huddled together around the last dying coal in their grate. Your children are clothed in scarlet. For them you do not fear the cold. Go, carry the blanket to the scantily covered couch, replenish the half fed fire, and your bosom will glow with a genial heat that never warmed the breast of the miser and the selfish.

“ Will forty shillings warm the breast,
Of worth and industry distressed ?
This sum I cheerfully impart ;
'Tis fourscore pleasure to my heart ;
And you may make, by means like these,
Five talents ten, whene'er you please.”

It is more blessed to *give* than to receive. Wherever within your reach and within your means such objects of distress are found, they are to be relieved by your direct personal agency.

No scheme of more extensive and general philanthropy can excuse you from this primary duty. Not only is direct relief to be afforded to those in actual want, but more extensive methods of doing good are to be devised. The man who furnishes an honest employment to ten families, and teaches them, by the exercise of their own faculties, and by the use of their own strength, to provide for their want, is certainly a greater benefactor than he who distributes to them of his own treasures for a course of years. The one fountain of good may fail; the other will flow down through many generations. But the objects of suffering within our immediate neighborhood, though claiming our first attention, are not the only sufferers we can relieve. Our sympathy should be as wide as the world.

“So Jesus looked on dying men.” To him and to those in him, there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free—*all* are embraced, none excluded. We have a right to remonstrate, we ought to remonstrate, with that rich Bishop of Durham, who rides in state—a coach and six, with liveried, gilt lackeys on every corner of his carriage—right *by* the supperless poor, the shivering orphan. Is he not the priest that passes by on the other side? No titled inheritance, no gift from the crown, no critical essays on political economy, can excuse him or the like of him for rolling in earthly splendor, while Lazarus lies at his door full of sores, and suffering for the crumbs of his table which he does not get. “Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me.”

We have a right to remonstrate with the Grand Turk when he hunts the Jew, cruelly oppresses the descendants of Homer, Aristides and Plutarch.

The Algerine that demanded custom and tribute from every vessel that rounded his cape, was rightly dealt with by Decatur, when he was taught, not as Gideon taught the men of Succoth, with briars and thorns, but with other instruction equally effective. We do well to send the missionary as the representative of a Christian nation, to take down the whirling victim with the hook in his flesh, who bleeds in honor of his idol gods. It is well for him to stand by the funeral pile and exhort the young widow not to cast herself into the flame that consumes her husband. Let him tell the deluded mother, who hastens to the Ganges to cast in there the fruit of her womb, that with such sacrifices God is not well pleased. All these are our neighbors; we should care for them, seek to deliver them from dumb idols, that they may worship and serve the living God.

And in striking this wide circle for our sympathy, have we passed none who are more immediately related to us, and whose claims are even more imperious than many I have named? Shall the writhing of the victim of idolatry on the plains of India, make us forget the tortures of the slave within the borders of our own land? Shall the infatuation of the wife and mother in Bengal lead us to forget the sundered ties and the bereaved mother in Virginia: forty thousands in a single year picked out at random in that State and separated

for ever from kindred and friends. Will you not interpose for the poor child in New Orleans, who, maimed by the gory lash, drags his disabled limbs by the very door of a Christian temple, exciting exclamations of horror from every beholder? And yet this is the iniquity established by law in this land—and the victims have no remedy until your hands are stretched out for their deliverance. Ought we, in our haste to do ever so important a distant work, to rush by so many of our own countrymen, exposed to every species of bodily suffering, and deprived of the privileges of reading, and, to a great extent, of hearing, God's word, and who therefore have not the oil and wine of the gospel poured into their wounded hearts? On the side of their oppressors there is power, and they have no comforter. Hope has almost fled from their bosoms; they look in vain to any part of the horizon which surrounds them for help—the blue vitriol of despair circulates in every fibre of their hearts.

Have you no bowels of compassion, no tender spot in your soul on which the burning tear of the slave may fall and excite your compassion? Is the nation drunk with the passion of supreme selfishness—cased in triple mail of hardness of heart? I know many specious reasons may be given for neglecting the wounded and bleeding slave. I suppose the Priest and Levite both had very plausible pretexts for their barbarity. They probably met soon after they had rushed by the poor wounded Jew, and had a dialogue something like the following:

“Brother Aaron,” says the Levite, “that was a shocking sight — that poor wounded fellow pierced in so many places, bruised in the head and left there to die — I am not certain but we ought to have stopped and rendered some assistance.”

“No one,” says Aaron, “has a deeper abhorrence of the *system* of robbery than I have — it is a wicked system; comprises every sin, is the sum of all villainies — but mankind are divided into classes, you must remember — and that was a Gadite that lay there in the road — did you not observe the mark of his tribe upon him — a descendant of the old slave Bilhah, in Jacob’s family; and children, follow the condition of their mother, you know. If that had been one of the children of Judah or Benjamin, to be sure we ought to have delivered him.”

“But again,” says Levi, “I have some reproaches of conscience, for I fear that the robbers will be out again when they see that we take no notice of their poor victim, and kill him outright.”

“I tell you, Levi,” replies Aaron, “we have a specific *object* in going down to Jericho: we are going to gather a flock of lambs for the annual festival, and we must keep that end steadily in view, and turn aside for nothing. If we should get back too late for the pass-over, the price of our lambs would fall materially on our hands — besides, would the Lord ever forgive us if we were not at the feast of preparation?”

“Doth not our King Jehovah,” saith Levi, “affirm in a case like this, that he will have *mercy* and not *sacrifice*?”

“Well, I know,” replies Aaron, “this is a strong case, and it seems to be reasonable, so far as that poor fellow is concerned; but you may as well attempt to fill up the bottomless pit, as to satisfy all the demands of those who would have us turn aside on our journey. I noticed, as I came along, that the vineyard of Amos wanted pruning sadly, and that the stone wall of Nehemiah was all falling down; now if we stop to mend walls and prune vineyards, we shall never get to Jericho.”

“Still, Brother Aaron, I cannot get those groans out of my ears, and that imploring look from the blood shot eye; I almost wish we had helped him up—lambs or no lambs, passover or no passover.”

“Well, I know,” says the Priest, “it is a terrible system which produces such results, and I think the whole community ought to strive to put it down as quick as possible.”

“I agree with you, Brother Aaron, upon that point, and now there is another, upon which I have thought a great deal, and should like some further light. There is a whole community of these robbers, around here upon these mountains, and their head quarters are in the old cave of Adullam, where David hid from Saul. They have lived there for centuries—they are descended from old Simeon, whom his own father cursed for his cruelty on his dying bed. Now they are so numerous that they make bold to mingle in good society, and claim to be respectable, and some of them even pious. Now my query is, if they

come up next week to the passover, and bring their lamb for sacrifice, whether I shall kill it for them, and whether you will sprinkle the blood on the altar and bless them in the name of the Lord, and pronounce them clean.”

“Now, brother, you have hit upon one of the most difficult of all subjects—you have struck the hardest stratum of which human society is composed—these robbers are completely organized—they live under a system of severe and stringent laws—and all their wicked deeds are *organic sins*, the individuals composing that band of Adullamites, are not accountable as they are for their own personal transgressions.”

The Levite was perplexed at this remark, and looked up as though he did not fully comprehend this saying of Rabbi Solomon.

“Why,” says Aaron, “you cannot prove but there may possibly be some one among that company of robbers who is a good man. He may have become a robber *involuntarily*. The laws of that company of banditti may have compelled him to be one of them. The implements of robbery may have *descended* to him—all his *property* may be vested in bludgeons, daggers, swords, lassos, and other instruments for way-laying and catching the unsuspecting traveller. Besides, while he remains there a member of the community, he owns a *share* of all the plunder stowed away beneath the stone ribs of the cave of Adullam. If he leaves his paternal inheritance and goes up to Mount

Ephraim he would become poor, and be obliged to fall trees and raise wheat, as the Ephraimites do. So if he goes up to Zebulun, he must leave all his plunder and try the perils of the sea. ‘We ought not to say therefore that unless he makes the resolute sacrifice, and renounce his property in the goods of Adullam, he is therefore not an Israelite indeed, a good man and citizen, and should be treated as an outcast from all the distinctions and privileges of Jewish society.’ ”*

“How can I again,” asks Levi, “take the lamb for sacrifice from the hands of one of these organic thieves? Why the very lamb he brings me will be stolen—it was nursed by other hands than his; and then he took it from a poor drover, bringing up the increase of his flock to sell at Jerusalem, to purchase a copy of the law of Moses for himself and family to read. Now that poor man that was robbed will be there looking on when his own ewe lamb is to be offered—that bloody wretch will bring it, that I saw skulking in the bushes close by the wounded man, his warm dagger dripping with blood—and shall I not expose him before all Israel? Doth not the Lord hate *robbery* for burnt offering? Hath not justice a sweeter savor to him than the fat of lambs—is it not more precious in his sight than rivers of oil?” “Yes, yes, Levi, that is all true, but this scheme of *organic sins* is as old as our nation. There was our good old Father Jacob and his mother combined together, and by a *system* of *lying*, which system by the way is very wicked, they con-

* See Dr. Chalmers, as quoted by the American Board.

trived to cheat Esau out of his birthright. God never *reproved* them for it ; of course *lying* is not a sin *per se*, it does not always imply *personal* guilt ; and so far as we know, Jacob had communion with God all this time.* And then the same shrewd old patriarch fixed the rods wittingly before the eyes of the herds, and paid Laban in a little of his own coin, and made up for taking an extra daughter off his hands, by relieving him of a large portion of his flocks and his herds. God never reprov'd Jacob, so far as we know — taking a man's cattle therefore by fraud is not sin in itself ; it depends upon circumstances. Now brother, if these Adullamites come up to the passover, I think we will kill their lamb, and pronounce them clean, notwithstanding they come covered with the spoils of robbery. Besides, if *we* refuse, they have some of the Priests of the first rank among themselves. No sooner does one go and join them, than they make him a broad and very heavy breast-plate of gold — they enlarge his phylacteries, make his ephod of the finest linen, and require but little labor of him, and that of the easiest kind. As these robbers carry on the work of plunder, they occasionally meet with a stubborn resistance on the part of the robbed and spoiled. They hate to take life when they can avoid it. They want their victims to go home and come laden again with the fruits of their own industry. They stopped the mule of a sturdy Israelite one day, a son of Issachar, took from the back of the mule, the

* See Dr. Stowe's speech, *passim*

bag of figs and the bottles of wine which he was carrying up to Jerusalem to market. Not satisfied with this, they insisted that the owner should take them on his shoulder and carry them up the rugged path of the mountain to the mansion of the plunderers. Issachar sturdily refused this indignity. The Priest was sent for to add the sanction of religion to the law of violence."

"Well he found nothing," said Levi, "in our sacred books to justify such wrong and wickedness as that."

"Indeed he did," answers Aaron, "quote chapter and verse to the poor, ignorant, but honest son of the handmaid. 'These men in the cave,' said the Priest, 'are the descendants of patriarch Benjamin, of whom father Jacob prophesied, "Benjamin shall *raven* as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." There, that shows you that the sons of Benjamin were clearly made to live without work — that they were to be supported by robbery. Now you see, you are one of those whom he was to strip and spoil, and as it is the will of God you must submit and bear it patiently. Just hear your father Jacob again, when he speaks of your tribe. "Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens" — one burden is to raise his food, the other to carry it up the mountain — don't you see how plain it is? Again, Jacob says of him — "he bowed his shoulder to bear and became a servant under tribute." " Can anything be plainer than that this whole system is all

right, sanctioned by our most sacred oracles, and by the example of the Patriarchs themselves?"

"Well," says Levi, "do as you please, Bro. Aaron, but I am determined never to slay another lamb for sacrifice for one of these robbers, and the next bleeding victim I see dying in the road, I intend to stop and help him up, and do what I can to heal his wounds, if there is never another lamb to bleed on Mount Moriah."

Why is not this course of reasoning, these worthless apologies in the lips of this Jesuit Priest just as conclusive as the apologies made for the organic sins of the slaveholders. To my mind the cases are precisely parallel, and the course of reasoning adopted to excuse or mitigate the sins of a multitude, who have joined hands to commit iniquity would tolerate all sin, when perpetrated by large bodies of men. The invention is worthy of a disciple of Ignatius Loyola. It was uttered first from the lips of a Jesuit Judge—no protestant shall have the credit of it. Judge Lawless, a catholic, in 1836, at St. Louis, charging a jury concerning the mob who burnt McIntosh at the stake, says, "If the destruction of the murderer of Hammond was the act, as I have said, of the many—of the multitude, in the ordinary sense of these words—not the act of numerable and ascertainable malefactors, but of congregated thousands, seized upon and impelled by that mysterious, metaphysical, and almost electric frenzy, which in all ages and nations has hurried on the infu-

riated multitude to deeds of death and destruction — then I say, act not at all in the matter, the case then transcends your jurisdiction, it is beyond the reach of human law.”

There has been an improvement, I admit, of the charge of Judge Lawless; he only excused an excited multitude. The modern version of his principle holds men excusable in proportion to the length of time for which they have been connected with a system of iniquity. Two hundred years will sanction and sanctify robbery, and make it a lawful mode of acquisition.

2. They are especially neighbors to the Christian, whom others neglect. The deed of the Samaritan would have been good, but not so manifest, nor done in such beautiful colors, if there had been no contrast. But the victim he relieved had been seen, passed by and neglected—neglected by those on whom he had the strongest claim for sympathy and assistance. A refined taste, strong natural sympathy, will urge men to relieve an interesting or beautiful sufferer; such an one may have more offers of assistance than are necessary, while the deformed, the ill-shapen, those against whom there is a strong general prejudice, may be entirely overlooked. It is the object of Christianity to open and fill a deeper channel in the human bosom; to generate there a tide of divine benevolence that shall reach every description of sufferers and suffering. “The spirit of the Lord is upon me,” saith its divine Author, “because he hath anointed me to preach the

gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind ; to set at liberty them that are *bruised*." Whole classes of sufferers are here described, most neglected by the world. If, then, you would be the disciples of Him who was meek and lowly, and sought not to please himself, seek the despised and the neglected, the wounded in body and in spirit, and pour into their wounds the oil and the wine of the good Samaritan. Is not the slave in this condition? Has he the sympathy that a *white* person would have in his situation. No ; no one will pretend it. By whom shall this lack of service be supplied, if not by the disciples of Him who sought the habitations of the despised publicans and sinners?

While I urge upon you as a duty, and as an acceptable tribute of thankfulness to God, to sympathize with the distressed and afflicted slave, I am well aware that this, like every other thing good in itself, may be perverted. There are some who are clamorous for sympathy with the distressed—they are *righteous* on this account, in their own eyes, and despise others. They claim to be the disciples of Christ, while they are far from manifesting his temper or his conduct. A single strand of flax does not make a cable ; a solitary virtue is very far from being a perfect character. *Imitation* of a single good thing is easy. You who hear me from Sabbath to Sabbath, will bear me witness that I do not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. Your

own personal depravity is frequently demonstrated from the word of God and the experience of mankind. The washing of regeneration, the renewing of the Holy Ghost, is constantly urged. Salvation by the grace of God, through the merits of Christ's death, is the central sun of truth that shines from God's word in this sanctuary. We preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. You have not failed to hear of the danger of self-deception; that every grace may be counterfeited; that while you are clamorous for liberty, you yourselves may be the servants of sin. Do I err, that in addition to this, I strive to bear a faithful testimony, drawn from the word of God, in behalf of the slave? I do not repeat it every Sabbath, but seek so to present it as not to disgust a discriminating taste and a Christian temper by the frequent recurrence of the same topic; and on the other hand, to avoid the charge of silence, through fear of prejudice or the unpopularity of the subject.

And shall the pulpit be dumb on the subject of oppression, in a land where nearly three millions of souls, *immortal* souls, live and die in ignorance—to whom the word of God is a sealed book, shut up from their eyes? Shall not the people be reminded, that in sixty years the victims of slavery have multiplied *five times*? that where there was *one* slave when our fathers declared "*all* are born equal," there is a *whole family* now? that where there were only *six* of the present slave-holding States, at the time of the formation of

the present constitution of the country, there are *fifteen* now—five times as large as the old six slave States. And now, grown strong with success, impudent for want of proper rebuke, Slavery comes to the doors of Congress, with a state six times as large as Kentucky, and with the ring of slavery inscribed with eternity upon its brow. The constitution of Texas provides that the Legislature shall never have the power to emancipate the slaves of that State, without making full compensation in money to the pretended owners.

The missionaries of the cross have been sent into the wilderness, to plant the Rose of Sharon, and they suffer the upas tree of slavery to grow unchecked by its side. They go to tame the savage and teach him the social virtues and domestic happiness, and suffer a system that crushes every family tie, to roll over the soil redeemed from barbarism. They go to open the Book of God to the ignorant red man, and suffer him to shut it from his poor ignorant fellow traveller to eternity, the African. *Christian Indians* hold *Christian Africans* in a condition where they cannot read the word of God. The American Board say, in their report, that if the believing masters among the Indians were to neglect any thing *essential* to the present comfort or eternal welfare of their slaves, they would be disciplined. They do hold them so that they cannot *read* the word of God. Is not this giving a full, but indirect sanction to the doctrine that the Word of

God is not essential to the present comfort or eternal welfare of the slave? The whole drift of the Report, and the arguments used in its support, are calculated to give comfort and peace to the conscience of the slaveholder. The American Board at Brooklyn, and the Old School Assembly at Cincinnati, issuing documents precisely alike in argument and conclusion, have erected two of the strongest fortresses in defence of slavery that could possibly be reared for its support. Both of these large and intelligent bodies of men, did, as I understand the case, give the sanction of their names, character, and, so far as they could do it, the sanction of the Word of God, to *American* slavery, as it now exists. They practically associated themselves with Gov. Hammond, who says, "God commanded American slavery four thousand years ago, through Moses." In the language of the New Englander, in relation to the Old School Assembly, "*they* (both) *dodged* the great practical question as to the abounding and acknowledged sin of slavery, and said nothing on that question, though called on by their situation, as by a voice from heaven, to speak in behalf of the dumb, and thus, by their silence on one question, more probably than by their partial and negative action on the other, strengthened the bonds of slavery." If Dr. Junkin deserves a pair of *silver* handcuffs, which the colored citizens of Cincinnati presented him, what do the other Committee deserve? I will not reproach them; but I will open the grave of him

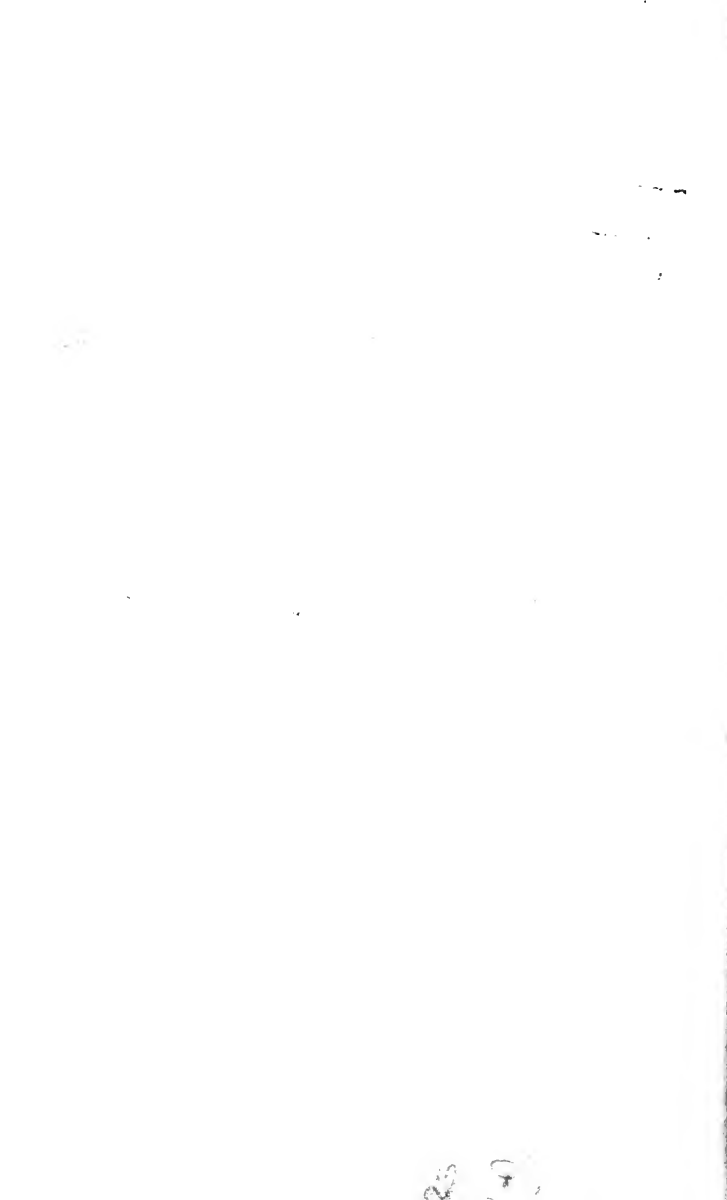
who sleeps in the dark soil, beneath the bloody stone building at Alton: "O, my brethren, what shall I say to those of you who recorded your votes in favor of the resolution that the Bible sanctions slavery? It is not for me to reproach you, nor have I the least disposition to utter one unkind word. I only wish that I could make you sensible of the feelings I experienced when I first read that resolution as sanctioned by you. It did seem to me as though I could perceive a holy horror thrilling through all heaven, at such a perversion of the principles of the gospel of the Son of God. O, my brethren, may I not entreat you to pray over this subject, to ask for the wisdom of heaven to lead you into the truth? Depend upon it, you are wrong, fearfully wrong. Not for all the diadems of all the stars of heaven, though each were a world like this, would I have such a vote, unrepented of, to answer for at the bar of God, my Judge."

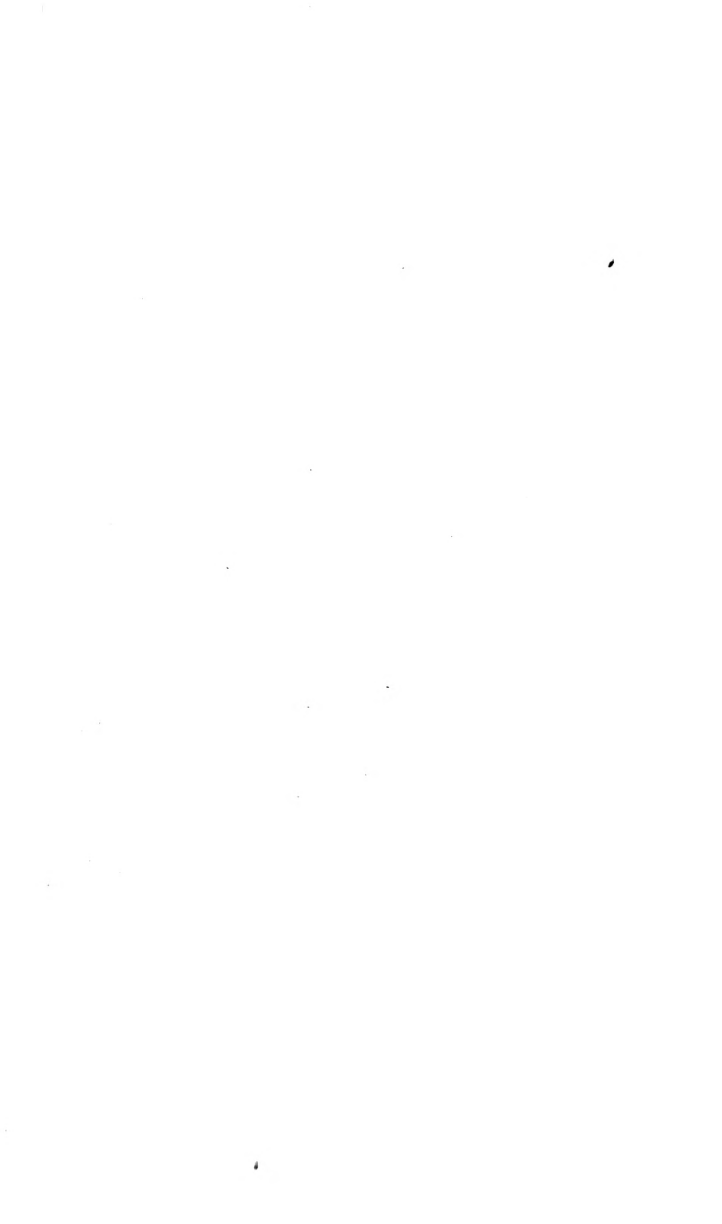
Have we not receded from the character of our fathers, when Mr. Madison would not allow the constitution to admit the *idea* that man could have property in his fellow man? when the Rev. Mr. Taite, who died at Beaufort, S. C., in 1795, declared, upon his death bed, "I should not consider myself admissible into the kingdom of heaven, if I died in possession of a slave."

Let us, then, as one of the appropriate modes of expressing our thanks to God for the precious civil and religious blessings we are this day enjoying, let us

cherish more warmly the outcast in our bosom, who lies perishing beneath the arm of the oppressor. Many pass him by on the one side, by the winding path of civil policy, or in the mist-covered path of theological discussion. Go right straight to the sufferer ; make him feel that you have a heart and a hand, and cease not your efforts till millions shall lift *unchained* hands to heaven, and give thanks for their deliverance, and call blessings down upon your heads.









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